



Eastern Camden County Regional School District

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Testimony of Kathy L. McCormick

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Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. My name is Kathy McCormick and I am the Director of Student Information and Technology at Eastern Camden County Regional School District. I have been in public education for almost 25 years, the first 18 serving as a Teacher of Mathematics and then a Teacher of Technology. I am here today to talk to you about my experience in school administration and to urge you to preserve the availability of high quality, non-traditional programs and multiple pathways to reach state certification for educational leadership positions.

A little over seven years ago, I became interested in enhancing my positive impact in public education by accepting an administrative position. In 1999, my options were limited to pursuit of an administrative certification only through a traditional route. I subsequently obtained my Supervisor Certificate, leading to positions as Supervisor of Special Services and then Director of Student Services. It was not practical at that time to pursue a second traditional masters degree program to obtain a principal's certificate.

While I enjoyed the positive contributions I made to the school environment as a Supervisor, I wanted to broaden my impact across all areas of public education and to expand my future career options by obtaining a Principal Certification. However, the traditional route provided multiple deterrents for me to obtain my Principal Certification, namely too many additional years in school and an inordinate emphasis on theory. I was at the point in my career where I valued collaborative learning experiences with skilled and experienced administrators, and realized I would not have pursued a Principal Certification through a traditional program.

After receipt of my Supervisor Certificate in 1999, the State approved the option of a non-traditional program to obtain the Principal and School Administrator Certification. I finally had a high quality option available, and in July 2004, I entered the NJ EXCEL program.

This option provided me with an ideal opportunity, recognizing my unique experiences and skill sets by offering a tiered model that connected me with other professionals at similar places in their careers. NJ EXCEL also gave me the practical training I desired by emphasizing job-embedded activities and utilizing a faculty of current and recent practitioners. I learned about the everyday demands in administrative positions and I graduated the program with a clear sense of what to expect as a school leader.

Furthermore, by having an expedited structure that emphasized intense work over a one-year period, I was able to complete the program in a reasonable time frame and to provide immediate benefits to my school district.

I am grateful that this option exists for aspiring school leaders and I would urge the State Board to do everything it can to protect the quality of effective non-traditional programs. I have been in education for many years and my goal is to become an Assistant Superintendent and ultimately a Superintendent. I look forward to that possibility, positively anticipating sufficient high quality candidates to fill critical school leadership positions.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.